

SECTION SIX—IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

This section describes the role of the Department in the implementation of the Plan, marketing considerations and recommendations and next steps in the approval/review process.

6.1 Role of Department

The Community Services Department—Recreation Division has the primary responsibility for implementation of the recommendations approved by the City Council as part of the City's Recreation Plan. Generally, this role is threefold:

- To *provide* programs, services and facilities;
- To *partner* with existing community agencies in the provision of programs and services; and
- To *facilitate* the development and provision of new facilities, programs and services, or standards of performance for each.

At times, the Recreation Division will be the best suited, or professionally the most appropriate agency, to be the community "provider" of a program, service or facility as determined by some set of publicly generated criteria (such as efficiency, effectiveness, professional competency, built facility, public accessibility, etc.). In these cases, the Division will align (or realign) its practices and use designated/allocated public resources (i.e., mission, staff, building, program, funding, etc.) to deliver the specific program at the desired level of service to attain the designated outcome. For example, the Recreation Division provides public athletic fields, gym space and park picnic areas to user groups according to the priorities set by Council and delineated in both Council Policy and City Code in order to support health and wellness and access for all.

At other times, the Recreation Division is in the position to "partner" with other agencies based upon the distribution of public assets or other resources. For example, the City has partnered for many years with the Mountain View-Whisman School District to provide safe and supervised after-school recreation programs at several school sites. Partnerships allow for shared resource use and are developed over time and delineated in memoranda of understanding (MOU), by contract or agreement, or the formation of joint/community oversight boards. Again, this will satisfy a desired outcome such as access for all and safe and secure programs.

Finally, the Recreation Division may be a "facilitator" either by initiating and then handing off a program or service, or by contracting out services, or by setting standards of service delivery that are then met by community providers. A current example is the provision of tennis programs and services through a contract for a professional operator to run a community-oriented tennis program at the City's facility, Cuesta Tennis Center.

By taking a customer-driven, outcome-oriented and collaborative approach, the Recreation Division can continue to play a central role in maintaining and improving quality of life in Mountain View. As provider, partner and facilitator, the Division will be responsible for communicating the vision that creating community through people, parks and programs is central to the work of the Community Services Department. The Division staff will be expending effort as much on forming critical partnerships to carry out the work of delivering programs as it does on expanding existing professional competencies to better deliver its services. Under this model, strengthening the network of facilities, programs and services accessible by the community will be as important as documenting and demonstrating outcomes of services rendered. By utilizing industry benchmarks and implementing best practices where feasible, the Division will increase its capacity to provide Council, commission and advisory groups with information to make informed public policy decisions. Efforts to research and secure new funding sources to expand resources will be seen as part of the role of the Department.

In summary, the Community Services Department's role will be to provide, partner and facilitate the delivery of recreation programs, services and facilities. Implementation of the Recreation Plan will involve the determination of which role will apply to each of its existing programs, services and facilities and the realignment of its efforts to meet the priorities, levels of service and standards expected.

6.2 Marketing Considerations

The development of the Recreation Plan has been a community-based, customer-oriented process. The Community Services Department now has specific information regarding residents' recreational and community services needs. The development and implementation of a marketing strategy is recommended in order to enhance the implementation of both the program and facility development and delivery systems.

Marketing is more than an advertising or publicity plan. It involves two very specific activities:

- Assessment of how well a program, service or facility meets the recreation and community service needs of the community; and
- Measurement of how well marketing efforts are communicating and connecting with the community, using an outcome-based approach.

Current Marketing Efforts

The City of Mountain View Community Services Department is highly engaged in communicating with the community about the programs, services and facilities that are available to the public. Some of the current tools used by the Department to promote services are: the Activity Guide (published three times per year), the web site, program brochures, paid advertisements, street banners and flyers. While information is presented in fun, entertaining and interesting ways, activities are primarily focused on publicizing information rather than following a marketing strategy in an organized and systematic way. Currently there is little assessment of how well programs, services and facilities meet the needs of the community, nor whether or not marketing efforts are having the intended outcome.

Vision

The key to successful marketing activities is a common vision, shared throughout the Department, that will clearly and effectively state what is meant to be achieved. Mountain View Community Services Department has adopted the following vision statement:

"We Create Community Through People, Parks and Programs"

The Recreation Plan and marketing activities should support the realization of the Vision.

Positioning and Branding

An important element of any marketing program is the position a program, service or facility will hold in the community and participants' minds. The "position" communicates the Department and its services' uniqueness from other agencies/providers and their services and distinguishes it in such a way as to persuade participation and/or support. To differentiate between positioning

and branding, it is important to know that positioning programs, services and facilities are foremost over branding. Positioning reflects the needs and wants of the community while branding is the packaging of those services and includes the positioning theme or statement.

Another way to look at the two is such: Think of brand as being similar to ubiquity where everyone knows you. And think of positioning as being similar to value where everyone wants you. So before creating brand, establish position. Consider positioning as that desirable place in the customer's mind where he/she not only recognizes the product or service but can also recite its attributes.¹⁰

Marketing Recommendations:

1. Develop a branding program that is clear, concise and consistently communicated throughout the Department and with all media tools.
2. Continue training and ongoing learning programs for staff so that they have the knowledge and tools to implement the marketing activities associated with this strategy.
3. Strengthen working relationships with other community partners such as schools, faith-based organizations, nonprofit service providers, public safety and the business community to support the achievement of this strategy, using their existing resources for communicating youth service programs available through the Department, their associated benefits and progress associated with achieving those benefits.
4. Develop presentations for community organizations, youth groups, parent groups and other stakeholders that will promote the Department's programs and how they "Create Community through People, Parks and Programs."
5. Develop and implement a marketing campaign to build community awareness regarding access to programs (including, but not limited to, financial assistance, registration and other logistics) and facilities.
6. Develop an awareness program that increases decision-makers' knowledge and understanding of ways in which the Community Services Department programs and services promote the community identified priority outcomes and satisfy the needs of target markets.

¹⁰ Rob Gelphman, Successful Marketers Know the Difference between Brand and Position.

6.3 Next Steps

The next steps in the Recreation Plan development/adoption process will be for the Parks and Recreation Commission, in concert with the community, to:

- Validate/revise the recommendations contained in the draft;
- Consider prioritization of the recommendations; and
- Suggest a phasing for the implementation of the recommendations over the life of the Plan.

Based upon the results of this refinement process, and pending comments by the City Council in a Study Session, a second draft will be developed. The Parks and Recreation Commission will then review the second draft and make a recommendation to Council for adoption of the final Plan.

JT/2/CSD
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